

EDITORIAL

A new year brings a new volume of HPB. 2006 will be the 8th year of existence of HPB, the official journal of the IHPBA. The new year brings with it continuing of issues and some new challenges.

The continuing issue is that of indexing by Index Medicus/Medline. The journal is currently under review but unfortunately at the time of print I do not have access to the outcome which I hope shall be favourable. I believe that we have met all of the criteria for indexing by this organisation and would hope for a positive result. However again I would like to remind readers that HPB is indexed in Excerpta Medica/Embase and the SIIC database. Furthermore, SARA (Scholarly Alert Research Articles) provides an email alert of the content list of HPB to all subscribers which automatically includes all members of the IHPBA.

The citation index is a separate issue and one which is dependent largely on indexing by Index Medicus. The citation index is run by Thomson ISI and this service is closely linked with Index Medicus. I do not expect HPB to be included in the citation index by ISI until we achieve indexation by Index Medicus.

The new challenge for 2006 is the development of electronic submission and review process. The Editorial Office has started working with the publishers to develop this facility which I hope will be welcomed by our readers. It is a process which will take some months to develop fully so that few teething problems occur once implemented. I hope that I will be able to make an announcement regarding this in the not too distant future.

A new addition to the journal in this issue is the Letters to the Editor section. HPB is the premier journal for the specialty of liver, biliary and pancreatic surgery. It is an exciting and evolving specialty with many issues which confront the clinicians, teachers and researchers of the specialty. Whilst the emphasis on manuscripts published in HPB shall be largely based on sound research with appropriate evidence, the Letters to the Editor, I hope, can provide an avenue for reporting interesting cases and debating issues relevant to HPB or controversies presented by the various published manuscripts. I wish to remind contributors that the letters need to be brief and no longer than 250 words. Please refer to the Instructions to Authors for guidelines.

This volume of HBP has also been expanded to six issues for the year. This reflects the interest and the volume of manuscripts that have been submitted. The increase in issues will permit more rapid publication

of the manuscripts and it will also permit comments and debates in the Letters to the Editor section.

As we move into the latter half of this first decade of the 21st century we may be looking at the launch of another surgical milestone. Over the last twelve months or so there have appeared at meetings scattered reports of abdominal surgery carried out by a transgastric endoluminal approach. The reports have shown that it is possible to remove the appendix as well as carry out some gynaecological procedures via an endoscopic transgastric approach. Operations carried out in anaesthetised animals have also demonstrated the possibility of biliary surgery via an endoscopic transgastric approach. In particular endoscopic cholecystectomies in animals have been described. I am not aware of any reports of endoscopic human cholecystectomies. However, I do wonder when the first report will appear.

Are we seeing the beginning of a new era in endoscopic surgery? If this is the case how shall this impact on our existing practice of surgery on the biliary system? Do readers of HPB have a view on this development? Given that many HPB surgeons are not endoscopists and that most endoscopists are physician trained gastroenterologists, what should the approach be from specialist HPB surgeons?

I welcome your letters and views on this topic. Over the next few issues we may be able to define some guidelines on this evolving technocology.

I wish all readers of HPB a happy New Year for 2006. I look forward to receiving your many contributions in order to keep our reviewers busy but, more importantly, to enhance the quality of your journal, HPB.

Jim Touli